

REMARKS

The Examiner in the Office Action dated March 13, 2007 rejected claims 20-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schrenk (U.S. Patent No. 3,589,958). Applicant has amended independent claims 20 and 42 to specify that the plurality of fibers introduced inside of the film bubble are a plurality of pre-cut fibers that are introduced simultaneously. Support for this amendment can be found in Applicant's specification and drawings throughout. For example, figures 4-7 illustrate various embodiments of introducing a plurality of fibers inside of the film bubble. Additionally, Applicant's specification at paragraph [0083] indicates that the plurality of fibers may be provided from an off-line manufacturing process. According to such an embodiment, the fibers may be purchased in the form of bales or loose in, for example, storage bins. The fibers may be separated and cut as necessary to be introduced inside of the film bubble.

Applicant respectfully submits that Schrenk discloses methods and a machine for the preparation of filament reinforced sheets. In Schrenk a reinforcement dispenser extrudes a filament and may include blades situated to sever the filament into short lengths as desired.

Applicant submits that Schrenk does not disclose or suggest introducing a plurality of pre-cut fibers inside of a film bubble. Rather, Schrenk discloses dispensing a filament which may be severed into shorter lengths as it is dispensed. This results in a serial dispensing of fibers and not introduction of a plurality of pre-cut fibers.

Applicant has added new dependent claims 71 and 72 to specify processes for creating a fiber-reinforced bag in which the first thermoplastic layer and the second thermoplastic layer are substantially not in contact due to the fibers introduced being in an amount sufficient to create a layer of fiber between the thermoplastic film layers. Support for these new claims can be found throughout Applicant's specification and figures, in particular figure 1 and paragraph [0047].

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 20 and 42 as amended are in condition for allowance. Claims 21-41 and 71 depend from claim 20 and are in condition for allowance. Claim 72 depends from claim 42 and is in condition for allowance.

Formal Request for Interview

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance at least for the reasons set forth herein. If the present application is not considered to be in condition for allowance by the Examiner, Applicant requests an interview with the Examiner to discuss the present application and the prior art of record. Applicant's Attorney Daniel J. Hulseberg may be reached at telephone number (212) 408-2594 to schedule a mutually convenient date and time and to provide assistance or additional information as required.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the foregoing Remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims of the present application are allowable over the prior art of record. Applicant thus respectfully requests that the previous rejections of the pending claims be withdrawn. Favorable consideration and timely allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Applicant authorizes the Commissioner to charge any fees (including fees for extra claims) and/or credit any overpayments associated with this paper to Baker Botts L.L.P. Deposit Account No. 02-4377, Ref. No. 077409.0455. Further, if a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not provided for above, Applicant requests such extension and authorizes the charging of the extension fee to Baker Botts L.L.P. Deposit Account No. 02-4377, Ref. No. 077409.0455.

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Respectfully submitted,

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